What is Claimed Is:

1. A chemical mechanical polishing pad having a plurality of reliefs in a main polishing surface for determining wear of the pad.

2. The pad of claim 1, wherein the reliefs comprise through-holes in the pad.

3. The pad of claim 1, wherein the reliefs extend partially through a thickness of the pad.

4. The pad of claim 1, wherein the reliefs have a rectangular, square, triangular or round shape.

5. A method for measuring wear of the thickness of a chemical mechanical polishing pad, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of reliefs in a main polishing surface of the pad; and

measuring a distance from the main polishing surface to a bottom surface of each of a plurality of the reliefs.

6. The method of claim 5, comprising determining total pad wear based on the measured distances.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the pad has a radius, comprising:

providing the reliefs in a predetermined pattern; and

determining wear of the pad as a function of the pad radius, based on the relief pattern and the measured distances, to generate a pad wear profile.

8. The method of claim 5, comprising:

providing the reliefs in a predetermined pattern; and

determining a wear rate of a first portion of the main polishing surface of the pad based on the relief pattern and the measured distances.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the pad wear is responsive to a process parameter, the method comprising altering the process parameter based on the pad wear profile.

10. The method of claim 9, comprising altering the process parameter based on the pad wear profile such that the pad wear is approximately equal at each of the reliefs.

11. The method of claim 8, comprising polishing an article using a second portion of the pad separate from the first portion when the wear rate of the first portion is significantly greater than a predetermined value.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein the first portion of the pad is used to polish an article at a predetermined polishing rate, and wherein the polishing rate is responsive to a process parameter and the wear rate, the method comprising altering the process parameter based on the wear rate such that the polishing rate is maintained.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein the process parameter comprises conditioning of the pad.

14. A chemical mechanical polishing pad having a plurality of reliefs in a main polishing surface for determining wear of the pad, wherein the reliefs comprise through-holes in the pad or extend partially through a thickness of the pad.